



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Office of the Commissioner

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H.B. No. 5422 (RAISED) ENVIRONMENT. 'AN ACT CONCERNING AWARENESS OF HEARTWORM DISEASE AND THE STANDARD DOG LICENSING FORM'

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture supports the spirit of H.B. No. 5422 (RAISED) ENVIRONMENT. 'AN ACT CONCERNING AWARENESS OF HEARTWORM DISEASE AND THE STANDARD DOG LICENSING FORM,' and shares the desire to help increase canine heartworm awareness and prevention. The agency has three primary concerns regarding the proposed modification of the standard dog license currently and successfully in use, however.

First, a requirement to check a box verifying that a dog has had a heartworm vaccine may deter some owners from licensing their animals, with the unintended negative consequence of reducing Connecticut's overall compliance rate for mandatory dog licensing.

Second, the mission of heartworm prevention can be better accomplished through education and outreach efforts that would be less costly, both in terms of human and capital resources required, and would make more efficient and effective use of taxpayers' dollars.

Third, the agency believes that modification of a standardized state license to include one specific issue or cause, at the exclusion of many other important and worthy vaccinations and issues (e.g., distemper, parvo, spaying/neutering, anti-trafficking, etc.), would be unfair to the individuals and organizations working tirelessly to educate pet owners and the public about them.

The Department of Agriculture is already in the process of modifying the dog license application form to include new artwork, which could relate to heartworm awareness and prevention. Other updates to the application form could be made during its annual reprinting to assist in dissemination of information related to this and additional important pet-related issues.